

THE ILLIOKOTA CONFERENCE.

Z. T. LIVENGOOD.

The Illiokota Conference was born at Enon, Iowa, Nov. 20, 21, 1890. H. R. Holsinger was chairman, and E. E. Haskins secretary. In 1891 it was again held at Enon, Iowa, with Z. T. Livengood president. In 1892 in Lanark, Ill., S. J. Harrison chairman and Horace Yoder secretary. In 1893, at Hudson, Iowa, with Z. T. Livengood chairman and sister Etta Harrison secretary. In 1894 at Milledgeville, Ill. J. O. Talley chairman and Emma K. Lichty secretary. In 1895 at Brooklyn, Iowa, chairman, Z. T. Livengood; secretary, Brother Hollis. In 1896, it will be held at Enon, Ia.

The time of the Convention is given up to discuss the questions which concern the best interests of the churches. Such as general church work, Sunday-school, Young People's Society, Junior work and mission work. The latter, namely, the Mission Board, has been a very prominent part of the work of the District Conferences. But for several years past the interest has been seriously slacking, a suitable Evangelist could not be secured.

During the work of the Mission Board 333 accessions have been reported, and I think I am safe in saying the number is 350 accessions.

In the line of Sunday-school work we are trying to be more practical and systematic and thus give more stimulus to the Sunday-school worker. And the same with the Young People and Junior Societies. As a rule the congregation, entertaining the Conference is largely benefited.

The first Evangelist sent out by the Conference was in the fall of 1890, and was brother S. H. Bashor, who was set apart for that special work by the laying on of hands and prayer, H. R. Holsinger and Z. T. Livengood officiating. This has been given as brief as possible, hoping it will meet your approval.

OHIO CONFERENCE.

MARTIN SHIVELY.

Whatever may now be said concerning the most populous and influential districts of our brotherhood, I think it will be conceded that in the years gone by, Ohio was both populous and influential. Because of her central location, and also the educational and publishing interests of the church, the earlier, and even the majority of later National Conventions were held within her borders. In fact, the Brethren cause in our state has been and is yet, most intimately connected with the interests of the whole brotherhood. Here, some of the sorest trials were passed

through in that deplorable period which finally led to cruel and really useless division. Annual meeting had here many of its warmest defenders as also many of its strongest opposers. There was little dearth of grand men and noble women who dared to stand in defense of what they believed to be right. Many a heart was rent with sorrow and disappointment as some act or another would unmask a leader in whom all had had almost unlimited confidence. I shall not further attempt to describe the causes which led to the organization of the Ohio Conference. It is enough to know that out from that crucible of severest trial, Ohio gave to the Brethren cause such men as P. J. Brown, Wm. Keifer, S. H. Bashor, Henry Jacobs, E. S. Miller, Josiah Keim, D. M. Rittenhouse, E. L. Yoder, J. H. Worst, F. H. Hixson, Isaac Kilhefner and many others, each of whom have been a power for God and for good.

Congregationalism was from the first, a doctrine held in high esteem among our people, and each man was allowed to put his own construction upon the matter. The principal purpose seemed to be a desire to escape interference from the hands of adjoining elders. In their zeal to escape this source of trouble, many went to the opposite extreme. Each congregation was considered a unit, and bore no definite relation to any other congregation. True all believed the same Bible, and there was a practical unanimity in the manner of observing the ordinances, but this very liberal interpretation of congregationalism would prove fatal to the real purpose of the church,—the evangelization of the world. The more thoughtful ones among us soon realized this, and began looking about for a means to remedy the defect. Sunday-school conventions seemed to be the best means of education, and they were held annually in different parts of the state. At these conventions general church work occupied perhaps only a second place, and the making of conference work to relate chiefly to the church itself instead of its adjuncts was slowly arrived at. Now, there is a three-day conference held annually, during which one day is given up to Sunday-school and other adjunct work. The remaining time is given to church work proper. Missionary work has always had a prominent place among the subjects discussed. During these extraordinary hard times, however, our hard Home Mission work has been practically at a stand still from lack of funds to push it. Various committees are appointed to formulate and present the business to be transacted. Perhaps the most important of these is the committee on general

church work, to which all matter of doctrinal or governmental character is referred, and by it presented to the conference. At Ankenytown in 1891, the first real steps were taken toward unifying our churches in activities. The preceding conference had appointed a committee to devise means by which the so-much desired end might be reached. This committee prepared a constitution, and sent copies to all the pastors who were requested to present them to their congregation, so that their delegates might come fully instructed upon the question of its adoption. This constitution provided for an annual conference, and by resolution it was scheduled to meet on the first Wednesday of June. It also provided for representation therein, making all ministers in good standing and working within the state, members of such conference. Ministers were ineligible to sit as delegates of congregations. This was, of course, to bring about lay representation, by which it was hoped to educate the whole church to the importance of the interests involved in our future work. It looked toward the arrangement of the various congregations into circuits or pastorates, and pledged the conference to see that each circuit was supplied with a pastor. It provided for the employing of at least one state evangelist, who should be supported by voluntary contributions and who should work under the direction of the Home Mission Board. It declared that ministers should be amenable to the congregation, which might upon conviction of wrong doing withhold from him the certificate of good standing, and thus deprive him from a seat in conference. It furthermore made congregations amenable to the conference for the violation of the Gospel principles. Thus its delegates could be excluded, and its relationship to the general body severed.

The discussion on this constitution was quite animated, but it was at last adopted by a large majority, after which its adoption was made unanimous. There were no "bolters," in this convention. It is but just to add, however, that its promises have not been very faithfully kept, except that it maintains an annual conference, and that its rules of representation therein have been adhered to, as has also its qualifications for membership of ministers. "Gospel qualifications sustained by a certificate from the congregation from whence he comes. This is understood to embrace the moral qualifications and faith, repentance, belief in the doctrine of trine immersion, laying on of hands, feet-washing, the Lord's Supper, communion, and all Gospel teaching." (Sec. 4 of constitution.)

Besides the usual officers, there is also 4